

D-353
James Office Block
Cambridge
Private
c. 1915

The James office block is an early twentieth century commercial building featuring Colonial Revival details. The building stands in a row of four nineteenth- and twentieth century structures that define Court Lane, formerly Market Street. This narrow strip of land has been improved by small, single-story professional offices since the early to mid nineteenth century. The paired window sash, modillion block cornice, German siding, and round arched fanlight transom are distinctive architectural features that clearly date the building around 1915.

Confirmation of this estimation of age is provided by the Sanborn Insurance maps printed in 1911 and 1918. The map printed in 1911, as well as those issued before in 1885, 1896, and 1901, indicate a much smaller structure on the site. Between the publication of the 1911 and 1918 maps, a significantly larger structure of square proportions is indicated at this address, and the shape of the delineated building conforms closely to the shape of the single-story office. This structure was erected during the ownership of Esther L. James, who inherited half-interest in this commercial property from her mother, Sophia R. James, in 1900. Sophia James had inherited the building and lot from her mother, Mary R. LeCompte in 1890. Mary LeCompte was a long-term owner of the two-and-a-half story brick house located behind the office block. The James office building remained under family ownership until 1976.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-353

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic

other

James Office Building

2. Location

street and number 509 Court Lane not for publication

city, town Cambridge vicinity

county Dorchester

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owner)

name Donald F. and Joan S. Johnson

street and number Box 583 telephone 410-228-4090

city, town Cambridge state MD zip code 21863

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dorchester County Clerk of Court liber PLC 197 folio 722

city, town Cambridge tax map 301 tax parcel 4 tax ID number 7-161980

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
Other:

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	1
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	1
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	Noncontributing
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	buildings
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	sites
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	structures
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Number of Contributing Resources
previously listed in the Inventory

7. Description

Inventory No. D-353

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The James office block, located at 509 Court Lane, is a single-story, three-bay, by two-bay frame commercial building located across the street from the Dorchester County Courthouse. The squarish proportioned frame office is sheathed with German siding, and it covered by a gable roof of asphalt shingles. Built between 1912 and 1917, the Colonial Revival style office is supported on a low brick foundation.

The southwest (main) façade is a symmetrical three-bay elevation with a center entrance and flanking window units. The window units consist of paired four-over-four sash topped by two-pane transoms. Louvered shutters have been applied to each side of both windows. The front entrance is enhanced by paneled jambs and a neoclassical surround with fluted pilasters that support a wide entablature incorporating an arched fanlight transom. Stretching across the base of the roof is a modillion block cornice. The asphalt shingle roof is pierced by a centrally located brick stove chimney.

The northwest gable end is a two-bay elevation with a pair of six-over-six sash windows evenly spaced across the wall surface, and each window is flanked by louvered shutters. Fixed in the upper most gable end is a small, rectangular shaped louvered vent. The edge of the roof is finished with an extended eave and return at the base.

The southeast gable end is largely obscured by the adjacent office building; a single, off-center six-over-six sash window marks the gable end, and the uppermost wall surface is pierced by a louvered vent.

The interior was not inspected.

8. Significance

Inventory No. D-353

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates

Architect/Builder

Construction dates

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

SIGNIFICANCE

The James office block is an early twentieth century commercial building featuring Colonial Revival details. The building stands in a row of four nineteenth and twentieth century structures that define Court Lane, formerly Market Street. This narrow strip of land has been improved by small, single-story professional offices since the mid nineteenth century. The paired window sash, modillion block cornice, and round arched fanlight transom are distinctive architectural features that clearly date the building around 1915. The building contributes to the historic character of Court Lane providing close historical associations to the official business conducted at the courthouse.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Confirmation of this estimation of age of the James office block is provided by the Sanborn Insurance maps printed in 1911 and 1918.¹ The map printed in 1911, as well as those issues before in 1885, 1896, and 1901, indicate a much smaller structure on this site. Between the publication of the 1911 and 1918 maps, a significantly larger structure of square proportions is indicated at this address, and the shape of the delineated buildings conforms closely to the shape of the single-story office building. This structure was erected during the ownership of Esther L. James, who inherited half-interest in this commercial lot along with other property from her mother Sophia R. James,² who in turn had been left this building and lot from her mother, Mary R. LeCompte in 1890.³ Mary LeCompte was a long-term owner of the two-and-a-half story brick townhouse located behind the office block. The James office block remained in family hands until 1976.⁴

¹ Sanborn Insurance Map, October 1911 and January 1918, Library of Congress.

² Dorchester County Will Book, JWF 2/219, proved 17 April 1900, Dorchester County Courthouse.

³ Dorchester County Will Book, JWF 1/242, 24 February 1890, Dorchester County Courthouse.

⁴ Dorchester County Land Record, PLC 197/722, 309 November 1976, Dorchester County Courthouse.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-353

Name James Office Block

Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

James Office Block
509 Court Lane
Cambridge, Maryland
Chain of title

Map 301, Parcel 4

PLC 197/722

Constance C. Corkran, widow of Dorchester County

to

11.30.1976

Donald F. Johnson and Joan S. Johnson

Clarence H. Corkran, Jr. departed on or about 7.9.1973

PLC 115/618

Christina G. Jones, widow

to

6.15.1959

Clarence H. Corkran, Jr.
Constance C. Corkran

PLC 116/333

Mary Lee Dunn, widow

to

10.2.1959

Clarence H. Corkran, Jr.
Constance C. Corkran

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-353

Name James Office Block
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 2

Will Book
RPS 4/485

Last Will and Testament of Esther L. James

to, niece

Written
1.24.1939
Proved
6.12.1939

Mary Lee Dunn, also inherited undivided share from
Mary A. Roberts

Will Book
JWF 2/219

Last Will and Testament of Sophia R. James

to, daughters

Written
3.31.1900
Proved
4.17.1900

Mary A. Roberts
Esther L. James

"in equal parts"

JWF 2/234

Last Will and Testament of Emily L. Jackson

to, niece

Written
8.24.1900
Proved
9.8.1900

Esther L. James

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-353

Name James Office Block
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 3

JWF 1/242

Last Will and Testament of Mary R. LeCompte

to, daughters

2.24.1890

Sophia R. James and Emily L. Jackson

Leasehold
FJH 10/297

Mary E. LeCompte

to

7.30.1875

Sewell T. Milbourne

99-year lease, lot of land being on Court Lane in Cambridge

36' x 36' lot

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. D-353

Dorchester County Land Records, various volumes, Dorchester County Courthouse
Dorchester County Wills, various volumes, Dorchester County Courthouse.
Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1896, 1901, 1911, 1918, Library of Congress.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 1/2 acre
Acreage of historical setting 1/2 acre
Quadrangle name Sharptown, MD-DEL

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The metes and bounds of this property are coincidental with the current boundary of the lot.

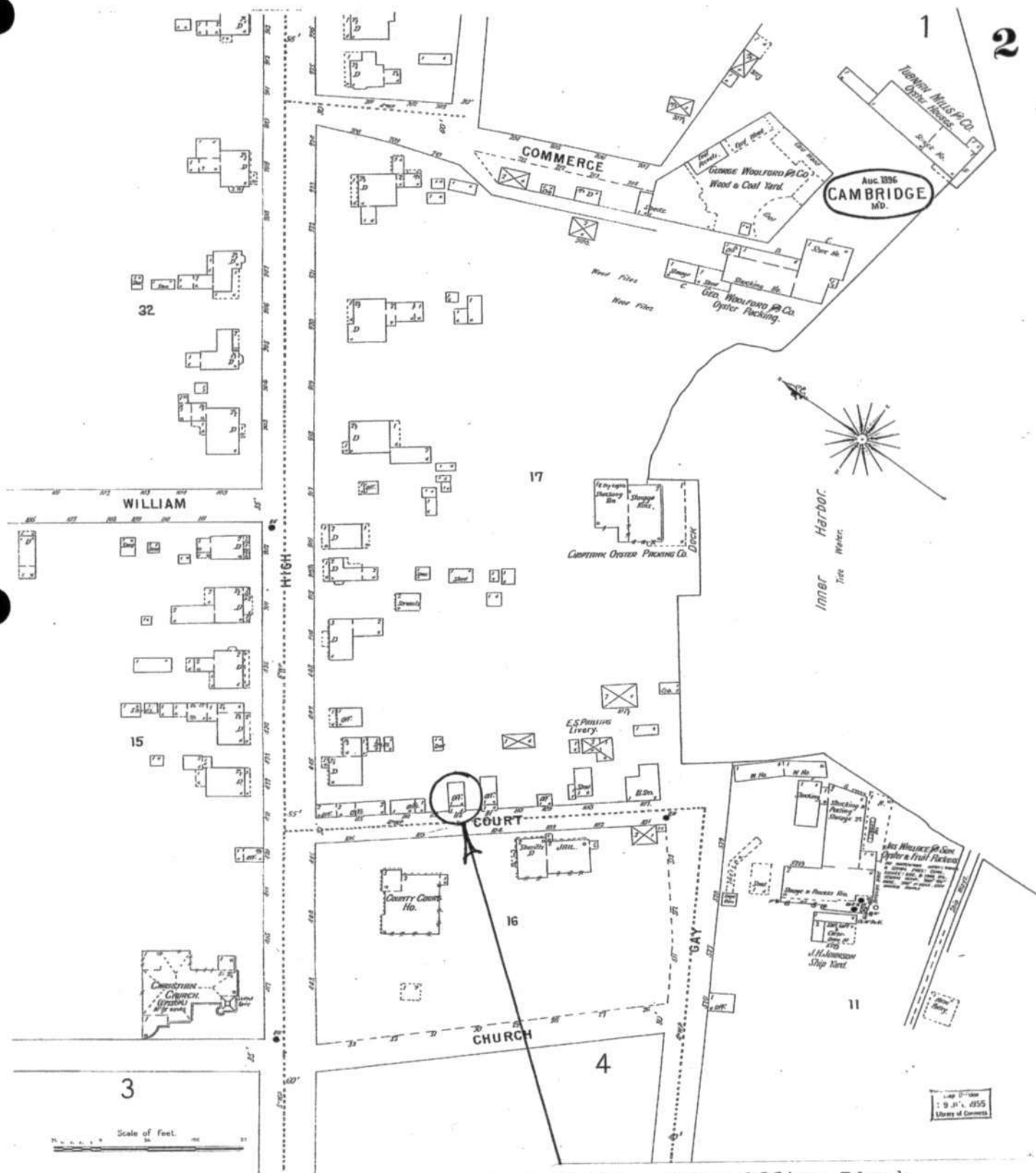
11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian		
organization	Chesapeake Country Heritage & Preservation	date	3/18/2008
street & number	Cedar Hill, P. O. Box 5	telephone	410-651-1094
city or town	Westover	state	Maryland 21871

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

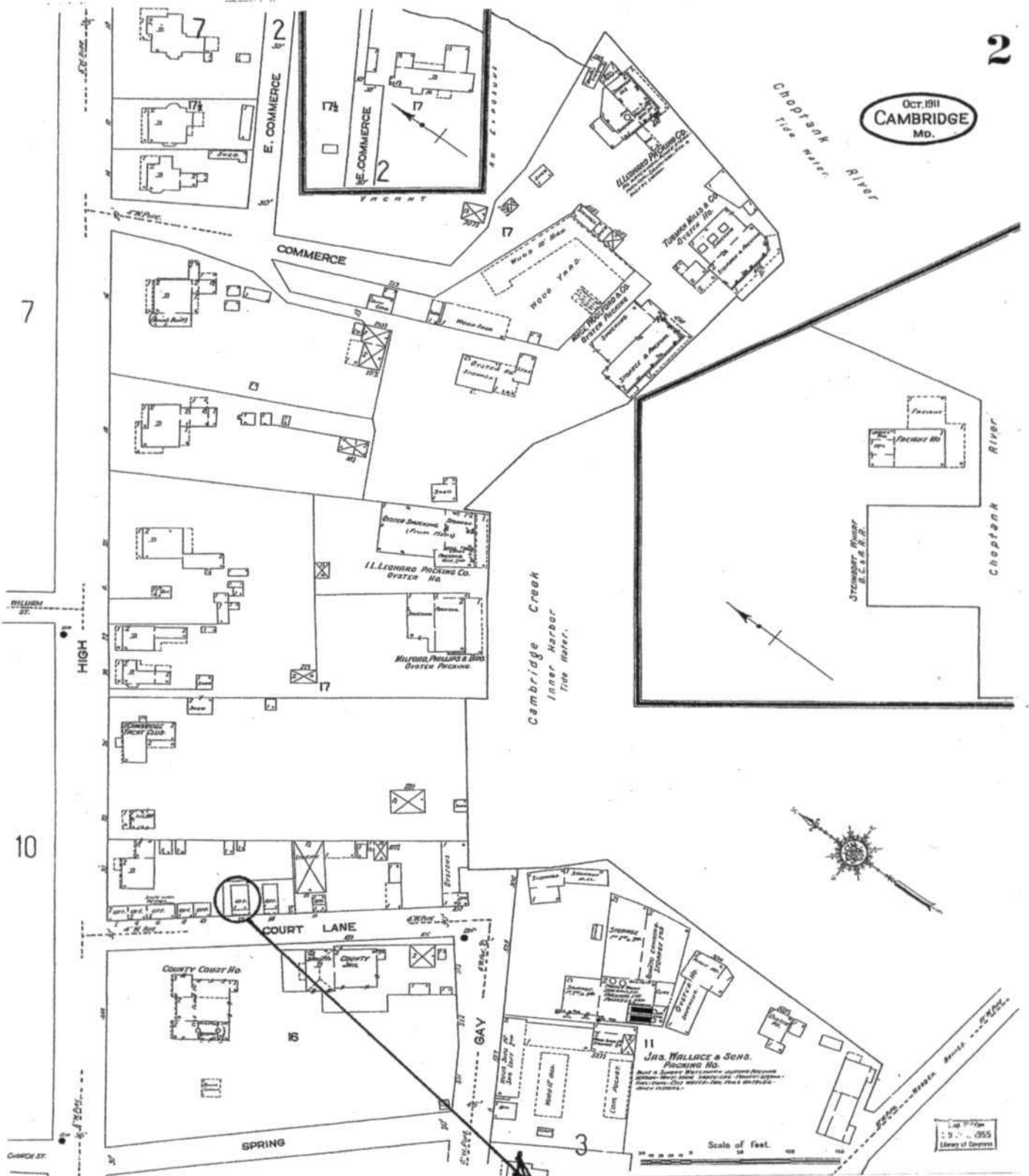
The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

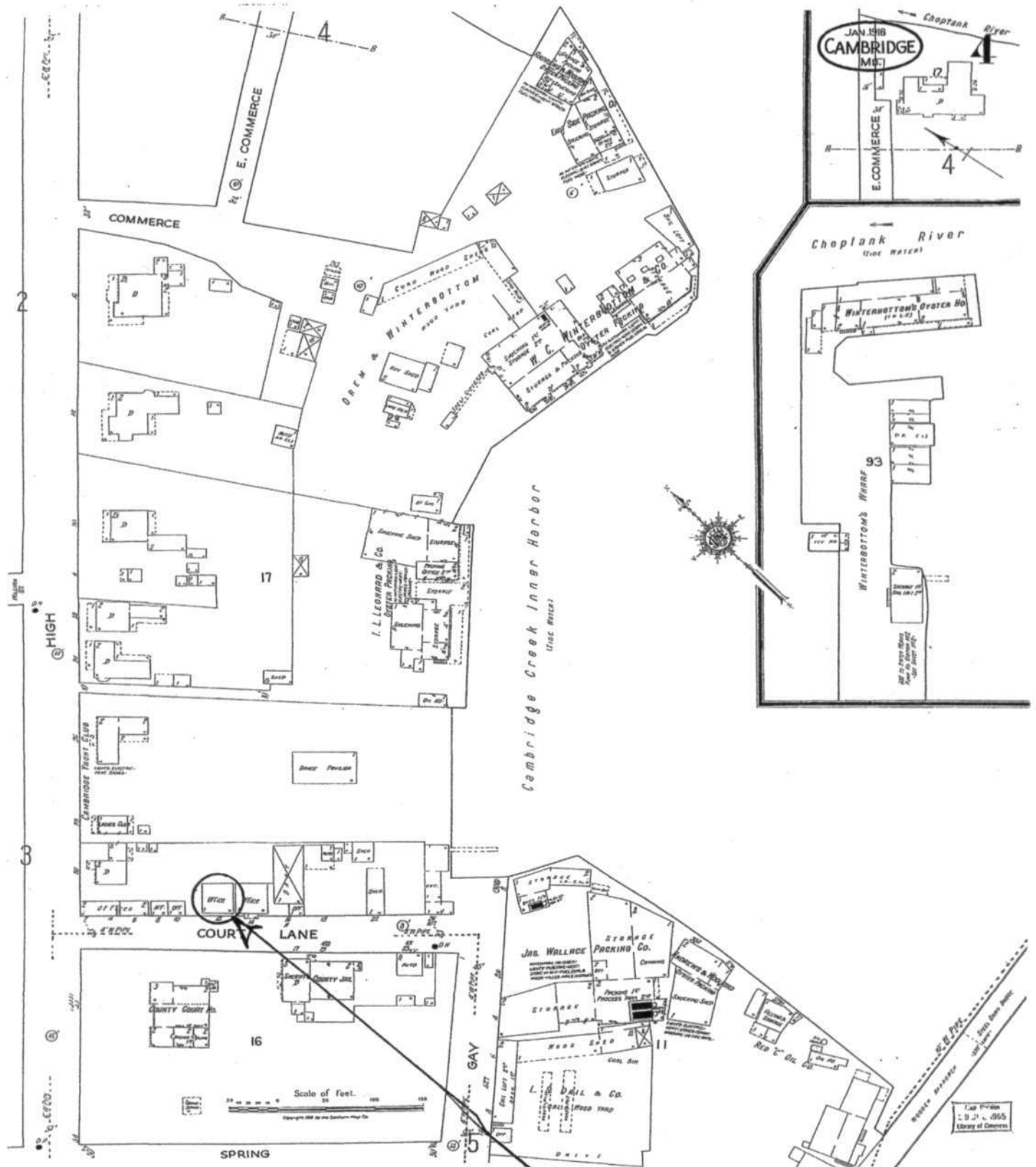


D-353, James Office Block
Sanborn Insurance Map, 1896

Oct. 1911
CAMBRIDGE
Md.



D-353, James Office Block
Sanborn Insurance Map, 1911



D-353, James Office Block
Sanborn Insurance Map, 1918

D-353, James Office Block
Cambridge, MD Quadrangle, 1988

TALBOT CO
DORCHESTER CO



5761 II SW
(CHURCH CREEK)



D-353

JAMES OFFICE BLOCK

CAMBRIDGE, DORCHESTER CO, MD.

SOUTHWEST ELEVATION

7/08, PAUL TOWART, PHOTOGRAPHER

WEG. / MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

D-353
1003534511

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

NOMINATION FORM for the NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME				
COMMON:				
AND/OR HISTORIC:				
2. LOCATION				
STREET AND NUMBER: 509 Court Lane				
CITY OR TOWN: Cambridge				
STATE: Maryland			COUNTY: Dorchester	
3. CLASSIFICATION				
CATEGORY (Check One) <input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object		OWNERSHIP <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both		STATUS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
		Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered		ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		
4. OWNER OF PROPERTY				
OWNER'S NAME: Clarence Corkran, Jr.				
STREET AND NUMBER: Nanticoke Road				
CITY OR TOWN: Cambridge			STATE: Maryland	21613
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION				
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Dorchester County Courthouse				
STREET AND NUMBER: 206 High Street				
CITY OR TOWN: Cambridge			STATE: Maryland	21613
Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #): 115/68 & 116/33				
6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS				
TITLE OF SURVEY:				
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local				
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE:	

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This is a small one story frame structure with a gable roof. The German siding is probably not original, as the building presumably dates to the first half of the 19th century before German siding came into use. The front facade consists of a door and a window on either side of it. Above the door, which is flanked by fluted pilasters, is a semi-circular fanlight with a ray pattern, flanked by two short pilasters extending above the fluted pilasters below. The cornice is modillioned.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian ☐ 16th Century ☐ 18th Century ☐ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century ☐ 17th Century ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | losophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This building is part of an attractive row of office buildings on Court Lane that date to sometime in the mid 19th century. These buildings are small in scale with classical ornamentation, with the exception of 513, that was renovated in the late 19th century. They are significant as some of the earliest surviving commercial structures in Cambridge.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

Acreage Justification:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Catherine L. Moore

ORGANIZATION

DATE

11/30/75

STREET AND NUMBER:

Route 3, Box 32

CITY OR TOWN:

Cambridge

STATE

Maryland

12.

State Liaison Officer Review: (Office Use Only)

Significance of this property is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Signature

509 Court Lane
Cambridge, Maryland

PLC 115/68

This lot, like 507 Court Lane, was leased in 1875 from Mrs. Mary R. LeCompte (see 204 High Street). Sewell T. Milbourne, a Cambridge attorney, built this office in 1875. In 1907 he sold the lot to another lawyer, John R. Pattison (see 310 Mill Street). The office has housed other law practices since then; today it serves the firm of Donald F. Johnson. The interior has been remodeled over the years, but the exterior retains much of the original appearance. This is one of several small offices for doctors and lawyers built during the nineteenth century that still survive in present day Cambridge.

Sources:

Dorchester County Courthouse, Cambridge, Maryland.

Land Records.

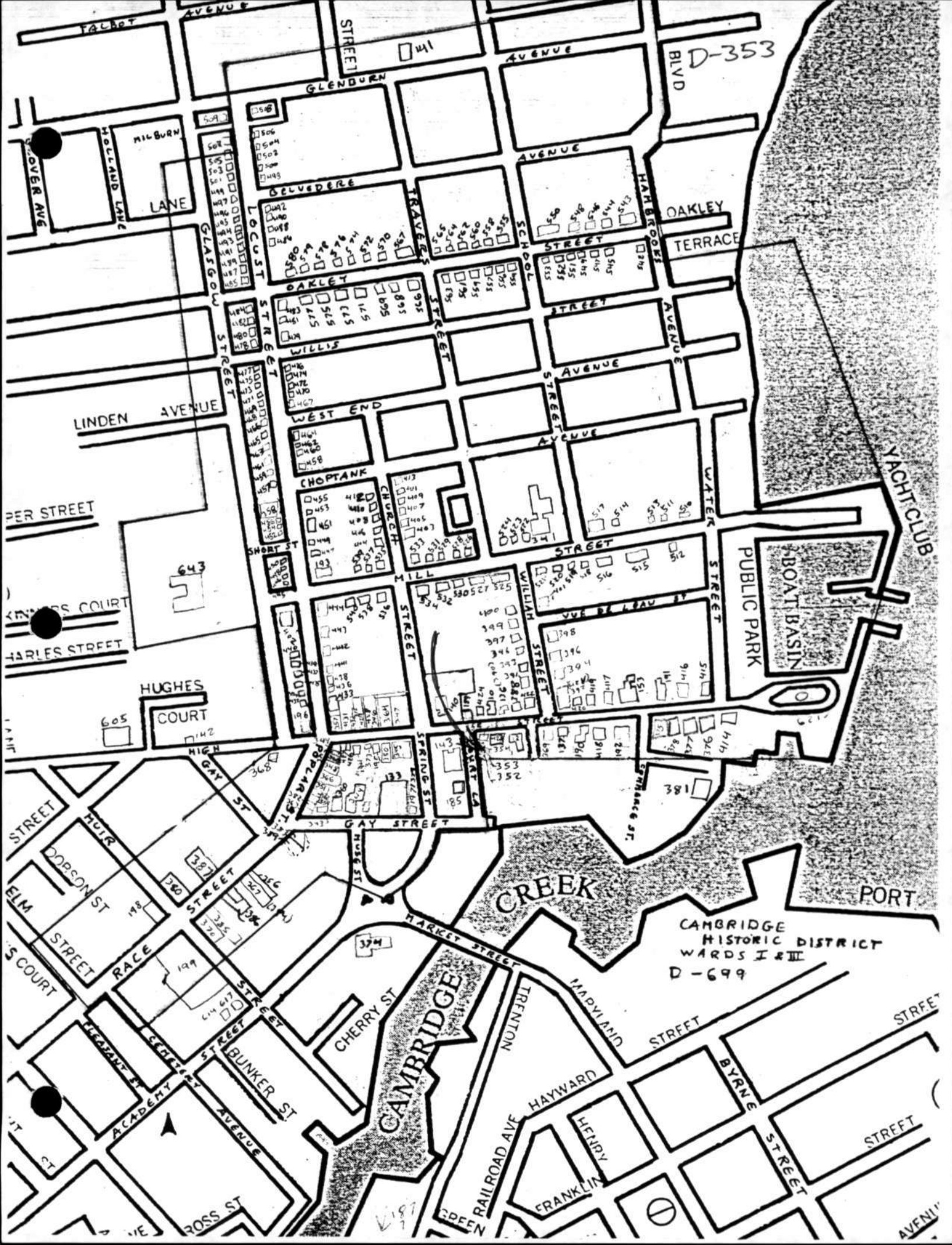
Dorchester County Office Building, Cambridge, Maryland.

Assessment Records.

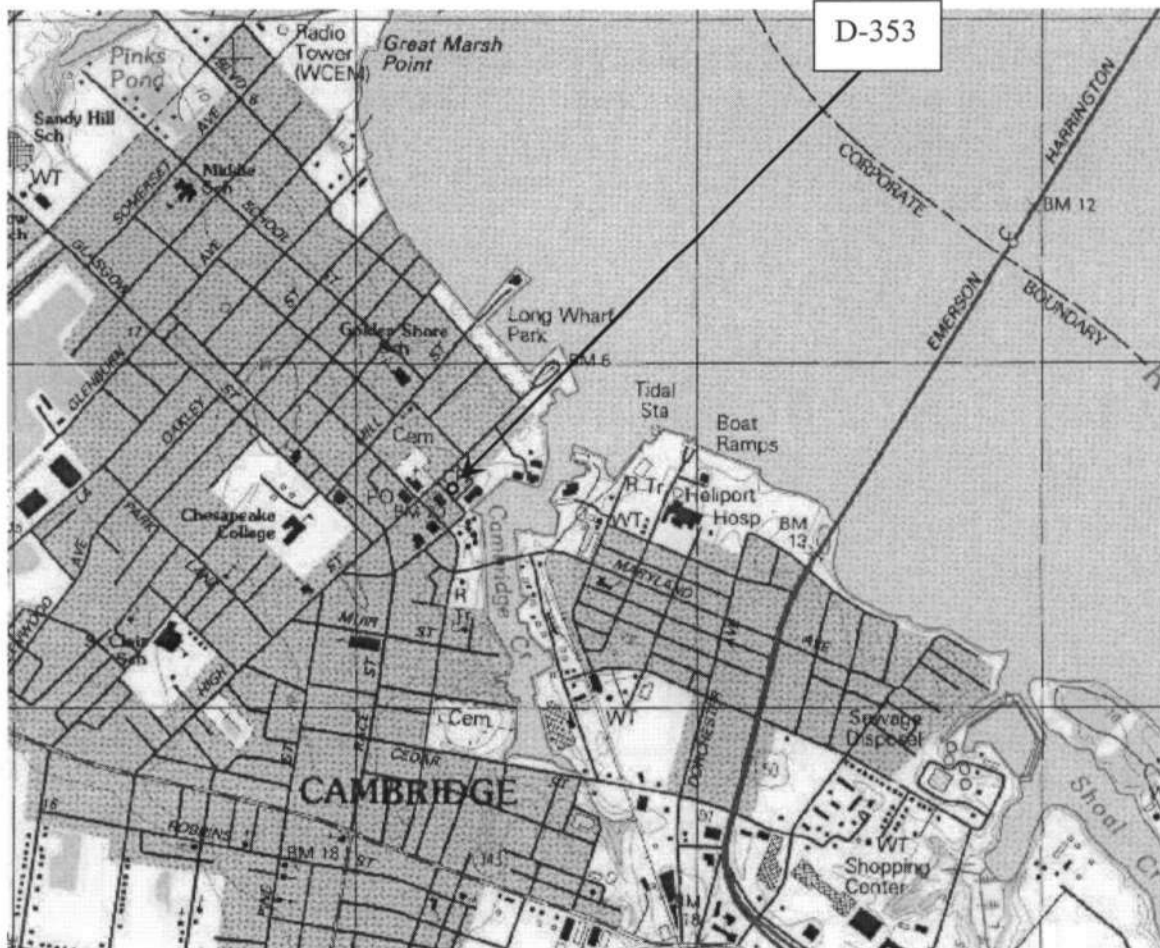
Research by:

Terrance P. Walbert

1976



D-353
Office Building
509 Court Lane
Cambridge
Cambridge Quad.
Dorchester Co.



13X1-70

50%

D-953



D-353

509 Count down



509 Court Lane, Cambridge, Md. - South Facade - C.L. Moore, 1976

D-353